

Catlin (B. J.)

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THE  
ANNUAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Connecticut Medical Society,

AND THE

CITIZENS OF WATERBURY,

AT

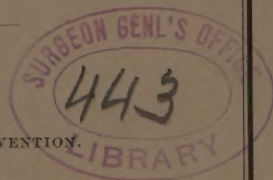
WATERBURY, MAY 26th, 1858.

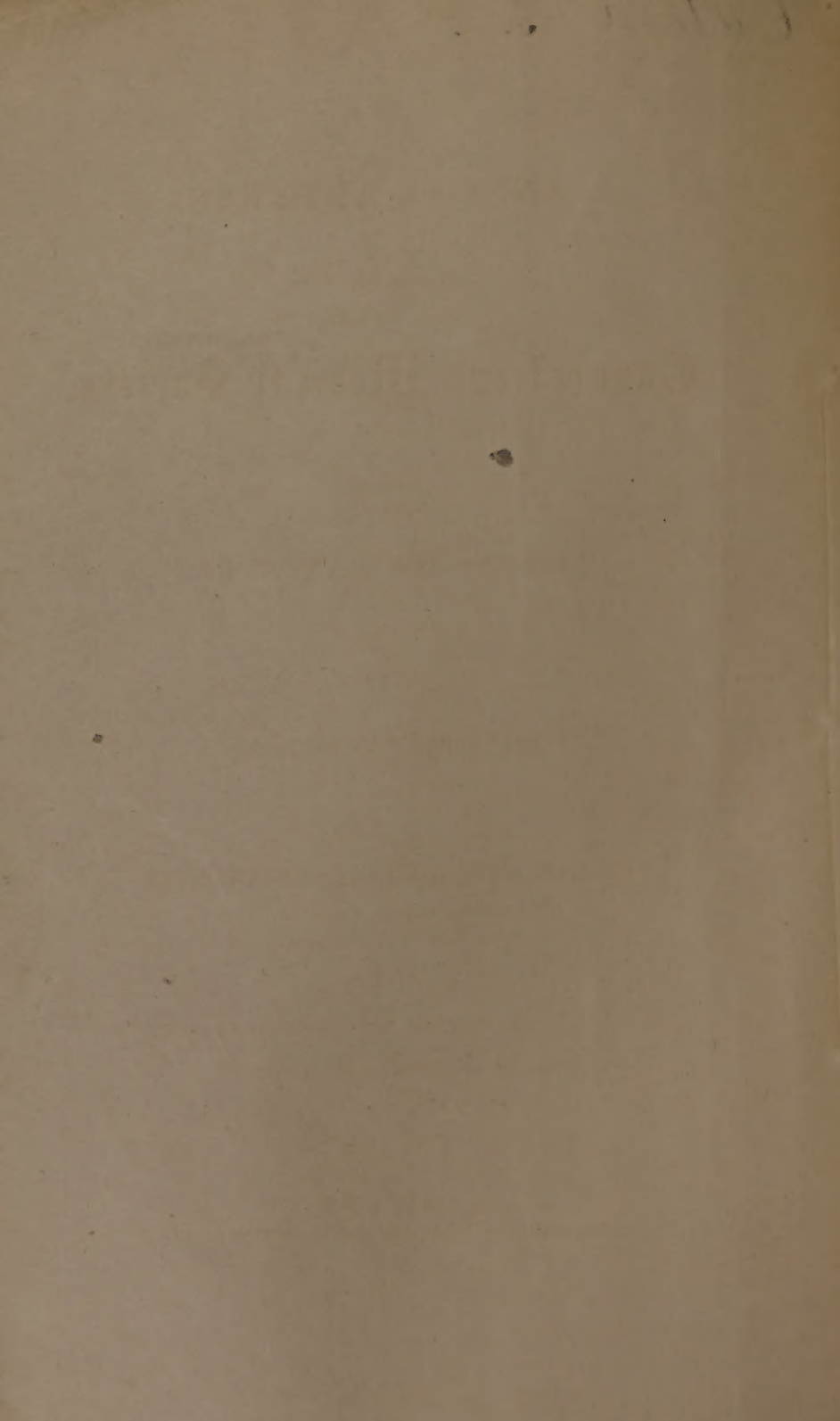
BY BENJAMIN HOPKINS CATLIN, M. D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE CONVENTION.

HARTFORD:  
PRESS OF CASE, LOCKWOOD AND COMPANY.  
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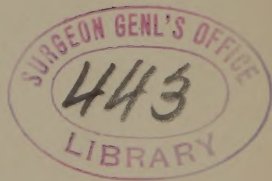
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## ADDRESS.

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GENTLEMEN:—Assembled in this pleasant rural city amid the greetings of our kind brethren, but more especially under the protection of the Supreme Being, we may quietly pursue our deliberations and endeavor to advance the interests of our profession, though not as on other occasions of this kind at one of the capitals of the State, in the immediate vicinity of the Legislature, from which we have derived our chartered right.

As many of us have recently come from that large convocation of medical brethren at the national capitol, it is desirable that we should bring with us some enthusiasm obtained from that centre of influence. Our business this day is to ascertain what has been done for the advancement of medical science, to consider and recommend such other measures as shall seem to us important for the improvement of our profession.

Though we shall find little has been accomplished in our society, in comparison with the great and important improvements which we trust are yet to be made, still I am happy to say the last year has been one of progress. Two new standing committees, one upon registration, the other upon publication, were appointed at the last Convention, and I am happy to inform you that they have attended to the duties assigned them. The first, by conferring with the State Librarian and making arrangements for the issue of more perfect blanks for future returns. The latter have prepared and forwarded to the clerks of the county societies an able and important circular, requesting them to communicate with those selected as dissertators, and press upon them the importance of prompt attention to their appointments. Important reports, I trust, will be presented by these committees, which may require farther action by the Convention.



We hope at least to receive some valuable dissertations, reports, and biographical notices worthy of publication with our proceedings, making a pamphlet of greater pretensions than those heretofore published.

In my communication to the Convention one year since, I stated that I had addressed circulars to the clerks of the county societies, requesting them to present to their county meetings the importance of having committees of inquiry appointed, which, if attended to, may another year present facts from different parts of the State eminently useful to the President for the preparation of his annual address. Though I have been informed that these circulars were favorably received, and committees appointed in most of the counties, the information desired has not been obtained.

The chairman of one county committee sent me a brief note more than a year since, but it contained no facts not already before the Society. The clerk of one county meeting where no committee had been appointed, sent me a few facts showing the low state of the society in the county where he resides. Less than one-half of the regularly educated physicians of the county are members of the Connecticut Medical Society; no dissertation had been read for several years. There was a considerable increase of quackery; several even of their members secretly associate and even consult with quacks.

The failure of these committees shows either that they did not enter into my views, consider them important, or they have manifested their reluctance to assuming responsibility or engaging in any labor necessary for the improvement of our profession, to which I have alluded on another occasion.

The last Convention passed a resolution approving and indorsing the recommendation of the American Medical Association in relation to the duty of each member to keep written notes of his practice, and to report from time to time such statements as shall seem important and interesting, with a view for publication with the annual proceedings of the State Society; and in furtherance of this measure, recommended the appointment of a committee by the county societies at their next annual meetings, to receive such reports as may be offered.

The county of New Haven had previously appointed a committee for this purpose, and at the semi-annual meeting they were authorized to prepare, and issue to each member of the society, a circular setting forth the importance of this undertaking. This committee have attended to the duties pertaining to their appointment, and recom-

mended that the registration of diseases be commenced with the first of the present year. Having an earnest desire that this registration should commence at the same time throughout the State, and hoping to aid somewhat in this important enterprise, I issued a short circular to all the members in the several counties,—except the county of New Haven, which was already supplied,—urging them to commence the record of their cases the first of January.

As we have so often found that the recommendations of this Convention to the county societies have been overlooked, forgotten or neglected, I have addressed a circular to the county societies, reminding the members of the necessity of appointing county committees in order to carry out the plan of the State and National Societies. If individual members and county societies perform the labor assigned them, further action will be required of this Convention. For the purpose of insuring uniformity in the returns, blank tables should be furnished by this Society, so that each member might every month copy into them his notes of diseases and accidents, made at the time of their occurrence. I have procured copies of the tables prepared for the members of the New York State Medical Society, which will be useful to a committee which may be appointed to prepare some for the members of this society. A committee should also be appointed, in accordance with a resolution passed in Convention last year, to receive, collate, classify, and prepare for publication reports received from the counties or individuals, or they might be referred to the standing committee on publication, as you shall deem best.

I have before me an address on the registration of diseases, read before the New York State Medical Society in February last, by my early and distinguished friend, Thomas C. Brinsmade, president of the society, who has been justly styled a pioneer in the registration of diseases, having kept a record for near thirty years; and after rejecting the first few years, as being too imperfect in his opinion to be worth tabulating, he has prepared, and published in connection with his address, a general summary of all diseases occurring in his practice, from 1837 to 1858 inclusive. He says: "I think any man who will persevere in keeping a record for one year, will afterward reluctantly relinquish the practice. The entries must, however, be made every day, or if unavoidable obstacles should prevent, as soon after as possible, for if delayed even for one week, the time required to write forty names, with the diseases and other conditions, will be more than most physicians can spare at one time, so frequent are the interruptions to which a man in full practice is liable.



"The daily practice of registration must inevitably benefit every man who pursues it. He can not write even the name of a disease without thinking enough about it to decide its diagnosis, its causes, and the treatment adopted to remove it. So far from occupying time which might be devoted to reading, it necessarily compels him to study, and confine his researches more closely to subjects connected with his daily pursuits, and he thus becomes more identified with and attached to his profession. The systematic habits which it induces, enable him to accomplish more work and in less time than he otherwise would."

By preparing and issuing circulars to members and county societies, I may have laid myself open to the charge of attempting extra-official duties. If so, I have no excuse to offer, except that I was actuated by an earnest desire to do what little I could, while I was called to preside over this ancient and honorable Society, to promote its best interests and prosperity.

A correct understanding of the appropriate duties of this Convention, the County Societies, and individual members, and a wise distribution of the labors to be performed, between these several departments, would conduce greatly to the advancement of our profession. We can not take a step in advance without the earnest, efficient action of individuals. If every member of this Society had any just appreciation of the responsibilities he assumed when he united with it, and engaged in the practice of medicine, and was willing to meet these obligations according to his best abilities, embracing every opportunity to make improvements, carefully observing everything worthy of observation, recording and communicating the results to the County meeting, soon a vast number of facts would be collected, eliciting discussion, and when collected in the State Society would with others from all parts of the State, be eminently useful in establishing important principles. Alas! too many seem to practice medicine only as a means of living, without any correct idea of their high calling, or a thought that they could do anything to advance and improve the profession of their choice. The efforts of those members of our Society who are alive to the importance of improvements should be especially directed to individuals, arousing and stimulating them to action.

Next in importance to individual action are the County Societies. They are like democracies and municipalities, where members meet *en masse*, affording the most favorable opportunities for the consideration and discussion of subjects brought forward by individuals. If



all the members in each county would make it a point to attend the county meeting, (two or three being held each year,) and make them as interesting and useful as possible, we should soon have an amount of business sent up to this Convention that would require several days to dispose of appropriately.

The state society being representative in character, and limited in its powers, is designed more to collect, concentrate and publish the results of the labors of individuals and county societies. The recommendation of subjects for their consideration and action, according to our custom in years past, would be wise were they met with that response their importance demands; but too often we have found them remain dead letters upon our proceedings.

Our profession suffers greatly from the want of well qualified and efficient nurses. It is enough for physicians to bear the responsibilities resting upon them as prescribers, without being held accountable for failures arising from bad nursing. It is often the case that nurses are employed to take care of our patients who are opposed to our system of practice, and cannot be depended upon to carry out our views. This difficulty should be remedied by the proper training and education of nurses. There are in all our communities persons, especially females, who need employment; and, if proper facilities were afforded, they would become well qualified for the duties of nursing. Every physician can do something in bringing out the proper individuals, and giving them some instruction, but a course of lectures should be given once a year to nurses by the professors in our Medical Institutions. That queen of nurses, Florence Nightingale, has set us an example, by the establishment of an institution in England for the instruction and training of nurses, which I trust we shall not be slow in following in this land of freedom.

There is a petition from this society before the Legislature in regard to the establishment of a meteorological observatory, which may demand your attention at this time.

I would again recommend to your notice the efforts now being made for the establishment of an institution for the improvement of the imbecile and idiotic.

As my official connection with this Convention and Society will cease after the delivery of this address and your appointment of my successor, I shall, with the above brief remarks and suggestions, leave the dark side of our profession, for you, the members of this Convention, to adopt the appropriate treatment, and turn your attention to a

brighter and more hopeful prospect by presenting some of the Claims of the Regular Medical Profession,\* upon the Confidence of the Community.

While all forms of quackery, and every false system of practice, have, by means of the press and free lectures, been urged with great effort upon the notice of the public, the members of our profession, being satisfied that their claims to confidence were good and valid, have gone on quietly attending to their ordinary duties, trusting the time would come when a discerning public would appreciate a learned, scientific profession. It would be wise to continue this course, were the community disposed to examine this subject carefully, and judge it by those principles and with that impartiality they decide other questions of less importance to themselves and their friends.

There are some difficulties in attaining a just appreciation of our claim by the community, even were they disposed to give the subject that attention its importance demands. Years of close study and severe labor are requisite to become acquainted with the science and practice of medicine. How then shall those who scarcely give it a thought, till the moment they require the service of a physician, be expected to judge wisely, and decide correctly! While we are perfectly satisfied with the confidence and patronage so generously given us, and fully appreciate the difficulties in presenting this subject in a lucid and interesting manner, we hope to be able to advance some principles which, illustrated by experience and observation, may be useful in guiding the minds of honest inquirers after truth, so that they may be successful in obtaining the best medical assistance.

In order to understand the claims of any class of persons, or professions as to their ability to perform any specified object, it is necessary to understand as precisely as possible the nature of the work to be accomplished, whether it be simple and definite, easily comprehended, or on the contrary intricate and uncertain, requiring years of study and labor to comprehend it, even in an imperfect measure.

If it were to dig a ditch across a meadow of a definite length, depth and width, carefully staked off, a man of very small mental powers might perform it, provided he had the requisite physical development. Higher and different powers of mind would be necessary to correct the derangements of machinery, even though it were

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\*Every profession has a right to choose its own name. We prefer the above, though long, to Allopaths, or other names given by our opponents.

simple in its construction. The management of more intricate and complicated machinery would require a still higher order of talents, a long course of training and education.

If disease was a unit, as some claim, or was all in the blood, according to others, or still all in the stomach; if cold was disease or death, and heat life and health; if each disease could be cured by a medicine which when taken in health produced symptoms identical with those attending the disease,—then, indeed, the cure of disease would be a very simple matter, and it would be useless for me to present the peculiar claim of the regular medical faculty for your consideration.

Most happy would it be for the community if the practice of medicine were such a plain, simple matter that even a child could understand and carry out its principles. But unfortunately there is no truth in these claims to simplicity in the practice of medicine.

It is not my design at the present time to combat error or expose false systems, but rather to present the true and valid claims of regular medicine. Any allusion to other systems will be incidental or by way of illustration.

Enter any of these large, massive and elegant buildings so common in this city, designed for manufacturing purposes, and you will find a great variety of curious and complicated machinery, performing its appropriate work with great regularity and sometimes with seeming intelligence. You look about for some motive power, and find a water-wheel, or a steam engine, (which of itself would rank with the seven wonders of the world, were it not so common,) the capacity of which can be calculated with mathematical exactness.

Notwithstanding all this apparent perfection, you will readily understand that this machinery is liable to derangement: one part is worn by ordinary use, another may be broken by accident. You step up to one of the gentlemanly owners or managers of the establishment, and inquire of him whom he employs to repair damages, or correct derangements caused by wear and tear, or the carelessness of unskillful workmen. Will he tell you it is not important who is intrusted with this duty? that a man taken direct from a shoemaker's bench, or from following the plough, is fully competent for the business? Not at all. On the contrary he will inform you that he has in his establishment one or more trained and educated machinists, theoretically and practically acquainted with the general principles of the machine, its various parts, and the materials of which it is composed, whether they be wood, steel or brass. He may also be acquainted



with those branches of mathematics applicable to the mechanic arts. If he did otherwise, you would pronounce him deficient in common sense. Suppose this machine, instead of being moved by an external power, whose capacity could be calculated and determined with great certainty, had a motive power within itself, the extent and force of which could be learned only by its effects, would not the difficulty of making repairs greatly increased? Suppose farther, this machine had the power of self-extension so as to be prepared for different kinds of labor, at different periods of its existence, and a power more or less perfect for repairing damages, the machinist being required to be more or less perfectly acquainted with these powers to enable him to co-operate with them, and never to counteract their beneficent action; would not the difficulty of making repairs necessary to keep the machine in working order be greatly increased? Would not a higher order of talents, and a more thorough education, be requisite? Most certainly. If you were to imagine still further, that these machines were endowed with an intelligent principle, acting upon every part, and every part acting upon that, would it not be difficult to obtain machinists competent to manage and repair such intricate and complicated machinery?

The suppositions I have made convey a very inadequate idea of the difference between a machine made by man, however great his genius or exalted his powers, and the workmanship of an Infinite Creator, perfect in all its parts though liable to derangement. When you look at man, the workmanship of the Almighty, you see at once in the action of the joints, muscles and tendons, an exhibition of mechanical principles: but that internal machinery which drives the blood from the right ventricle through the arteries into the capillaries, and from thence returns it through the veins to the right ventricle; which again throws it through the pulmonary artery into the lungs, spreading it out upon those delicate membranes which form the air cells, placing it in a situation favorable for those changes so necessary for its purification; that machinery and chemical laboratory which receives, masticates, digests and assimilates the food; and those wonder-working powers which are so silently and constantly enlarging the body from infancy to old age, or removing and remodeling those portions of the animal structure which by use become unfit for the performance of the functions assigned them,—these are not evident to our senses. The general facts in relation to them are so familiar to medical men and to many intelligent non-professional persons, that it is difficult for us to realize that many years, yea, centuries of laborious study, dissec-



tion and experiments, upon living and dead bodies, have been necessary to discover and establish those principles. When we leave inert, unorganized matter, and come to organic, living beings, whether of vegetable origin, from the lowest order which springs up in a night and perishes under the influence of the first rays of the morning sun, to the stately trees which live for centuries, or all grades of animal life, from the smallest insect to man, the lord of all, we come upon an entire new field, requiring the knowledge of new laws.

We pass over this vast field of organized living matter, vegetable and animal, which separates the inorganic substances of which the most curious and intricate machinery is constructed, from the human system, the diseases of which it is our business to treat. The vast extent of this intervening field shows the infinite distance between them. That we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," all will admit; and I think after a little investigation, every one would be satisfied that long, deep study and extensive investigation are necessary to prepare one to treat diseases with success. It will of course be impossible for the physician ever to become as well acquainted with the organization he is required to keep in repair, as the machinist with his machine. But there is much that he can and must learn, in order to qualify himself for the performance of his duties. He can become thoroughly acquainted with anatomy, physiology, materia medica, pathology, and therapeutics; with chemistry, especially in regard to those chemical articles used as medicine and animal chemistry. The surgeon must understand mechanical principles in order to reduce dislocations and fractures and retain them in their place, to correct and remove deformities. The practitioner of medicine should have the requisite knowledge of meteorology to understand the influence of the weather and climate upon diseases.

The progress of medicine, of which I shall speak in another place, is constantly enlarging and extending the range of studies and science necessary to be understood by the physician. It is now necessary for him to be acquainted with acoustics, or the science of sounds, in order to ascertain the normal and diseased state of the heart, lungs, and other internal organs; with the science of optics, so as to use with accuracy the microscope, which is aiding much in the investigation and diagnosis of disease. The practice of medicine can not be pursued with eminent success without a minute and extended observation of facts, a great amount of deep, profound thinking and reasoning, requiring a thorough knowledge of mental philosophy. A profession that requires a thorough knowledge of these sciences may well be

called a *learned profession*. That all the members of the regular medical faculty are thus learned, is not claimed, but it is our constant effort to raise the standard of medical education. There are many men in our profession who though not very learned in medicine or the collateral sciences, yet are men of sound judgment and discrimination, capable of understanding and applying in practice the principles discovered by their more learned brethren. Few, comparatively, can become familiarly acquainted with the microscope, but their skill can be employed for the benefit of others.

No practitioners outside of our fraternity, with a very few exceptions, make any claims to scientific attainments. They base their claims upon the simplicity of the practice of medicine, the one idea principle that disease is a unit. The advantages of education and science are nullified when their possessors embrace a false system, unless in some rare instances it enables them to resort to true science when they find their false theories failing. Much may be learned of the claims of any profession by the character of its members. The successful practice of medicine requires the faculty of careful, close observation, a retentive memory, great discrimination, and sound judgment. That these faculties are possessed by the members of the regular profession, in an eminent degree, as they are exhibited in their character as men and citizens in the communities where they reside, will, I believe, be readily admitted by every unprejudiced mind. Some, however, do not seem to understand that the man who possesses these desirable qualifications of mind and character, will carry them into the investigation of disease and apply them in his practice. A gentleman of good character and intelligent in ordinary matters, but who had employed various kinds of doctors, from one extreme of absurdity to another, said to a regular and experienced physician whom he chanced once to employ, "Doctor, I respect you very much as a man and a Christian, but I do not believe in your system of practice." Now, as a minister said of a certain woman, she was a good Christian but a poor cook, so a man may be a good Christian, an honorable, upright citizen, manifest sound common sense in the ordinary transactions of life, and still be a poor physician, but we can hardly conceive of such a thing as being possible. We always admire to see the exhibition of true benevolence in others, however we may fail in the exercise of it ourselves. The medical profession fully realize the import of the words of our Saviour, "For ye have the poor always with you." Every physician doing a large business, extending through a period of thirty years, will find on his book thousands of

dollars unpaid. A larger amount is thus given by the members of our profession, according to their income, than by any other class of persons. But it is often said this is nothing: physicians charge the rich enough to make up these losses. This is not true, for those able to pay are not charged more than the services rendered are worth. The gratuitous services of our profession to the poor have been continued so long that they are considered as a matter of course; their performance calls forth no commendation; the neglect now to continue them would rather call forth unqualified condemnation.

Fifty years since, travelers passing through the town of Farmington on the road to Hartford, would observe a little cage set in a bank near the turnpike, occupied by a raving maniac, staring and shouting to the passing travelers; subsequently he was removed to a barn near by, where he sat crouched on his limbs till they inflamed and adhered together, so that he could not be straightened. Here he sat year after year, covered over with an old blanket, and had his food given him as it was to the chickens of the barn-yard. This is not mentioned as a reproach to the good people of Farmington, there being few towns whose inhabitants have a more enviable reputation for morality and true religion. Other cases perhaps as revolting existed in other towns. Those who were poor were sold like other paupers to the lowest bidder, to be confined in dungeons, cages, strait jackets, or chained to the floor. A few physicians, in connection with other benevolent individuals, made arrangements for the establishment of the Connecticut Retreat. The Connecticut Medical Society gave every dollar of its funds. Private benevolence, with aid from the State, has now made provision in part for all these unfortunate persons where they can be treated like human beings.

An eminent physician of Hartford was so unfortunate as to have a daughter deprived of hearing and speech. Deep sympathy on the part of the father and his brethren, led to the establishment of the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, where, through the munificence of the several States of New England, provision is made for the gratuitous education of all their indigent deaf and dumb.

The physicians of New Haven, seeing the necessity of a hospital in that city, by their hearty efforts and material aid, with assistance from benevolent individuals and the State, established the Connecticut State Hospital, where they have ever continued to give the best medical and surgical attendance without fee or reward. The physicians of Hartford are doing the same for this city.

The manly exhibition of courage ever calls forth the spontaneous

plaudits of an admiring multitude. Even though we may be men of peace, we can but commend the soldier as he marches up fearlessly to the cannon's mouth, and as his comrade is cut down before him steps up to fill his place. Who has ever read the story of the brave Spartan band, under the immortal Leonidas, at the straits of Thermopylae, without having his spirit stirred within him? And yet, says Dr. A. Clark, President of the New York State Medical Society, in his eloquent address, delivered at Albany in 1853, "I have known the soldier of twenty battles turn pale and flee before the least of the physician's perils."

There is much to strengthen the soldier's courage. The spirit-stirring music, the pomp and parade, the marching and the counter-marching, the noise and confusion. The thousands or hundreds of thousands around him to encourage or witness his cowardice, if he suffers it to be manifested. The physician, on the contrary, goes quietly and alone into the dark chambers of sickness and death, filled with all the elements of disease, or down into the filthy abodes of the poor, reeking with contagion. "The pestilence strikes terror to the hearts of every man: the physician never turns away from it. From the dreadful days when death grew frantic with its own work of slaughter, and Hippocrates stood up to wrestle with it night and day in terror-stricken Athens, to the hour when the affrighted people of our time fled before the most dreadful of all plagues that ever scourged the earth, the physician has never turned his back on danger."\*

I shall never forget the fear and alarm which spread over this whole nation "when the first blow of this last and most relentless of death's agents" \* first appeared in our country, more than a quarter of a century since.

The laws of this epidemic were not then well understood. No one knew that any part of the country would escape its ravages. As it spread from city to city, from town to town, the inhabitants fled before it in the wildest confusion. Physicians alone remained voluntarily at their posts of danger and death. Many of those living in places exempt from the disease, visited the cities where it was prevailing; sent by the board of health at the public expense, or going at their own charges, to study the character of the epidemic; visiting the public hospitals, seeing hundreds of cases of the disease, witnessing many deaths, and making examination after death; and all for what pur-

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\* Dr. A. Clark's Address.

† Ibid.



pose? That they might be better qualified to treat the disease in case it appeared in their own field of practice. "Of thirty assistant physicians doing duty at the Bellevue Hospital in the city of New York, during the late prevalence of ship fever in that city, twenty-one took the disease, and five died of it;" one of them the accomplished son of one of our own members; "and even of the nine who escaped it there, three had already suffered from it in other medical charities: yet their ranks were always full; and I speak [says Dr. Clark] from personal knowledge, when I say that I know not where to look for a body of young men whose duty is performed with more conscientiousness and courage and intelligence."

All will recollect a more recent case; the prevalence of the yellow fever in Norfolk, three years ago, where forty of our "profession, being four-fifths of those in that community, swelled too as their ranks had been, by volunteers, from other cities, fell manfully contending with disease and death." "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

Another claim of regular medicine to confidence, is its progressive character. Many things, excellent and desirable in themselves, are insignificant in their commencement, but having vitality in their nature, progress more or less regularly and rapidly, till they attain great perfection.

Some efforts were probably made at an early period of the world's history, to alleviate the pains and sufferings of the failing and diseased body, but they must have been extremely rude and unsatisfactory. The first phase of medicine, according to history, is the Magical. In this form it exists in all savage and barbarous nations. We hear in our day of the great efficacy of Indian remedies, and the skill of Indian doctors, but all Indians, before their intercourse with the white man, had medicine men, or conjurers, and depended on them for the cure of their diseases. Next in order was the Empirical. A certain article relieving a certain symptom, or set of symptoms, was recommended in cases of a similar character. Then followed the time for theories and hypotheses. Many of these were elaborated with great shrewdness and skill, and put forth with great confidence and abundant display. Others soon followed, which if not more shrewd and plausible, yet from their novelty supplanted their predecessors.

Efforts to maintain a theory lead to the perverting or falsifying of facts. Everything that can be pressed into its support is sought with avidity, while whatever is unfavorable, is rejected or per-

verted. The evil influence of these theoretical speculations did not prevent all valuable discoveries. Prominent among these were the discovery of the circulation of the blood by the immortal Harvey, and vaccination by Jenner. Neither did great discoveries at once prevent theoretical speculations, but rather opened new channels for their development. While the influence of theories has been on the whole evil, some have contained, buried up under a great amount of rubbish, very important principles.

The theory of Brown, known as the Brownian system or theory, from its great simplicity was for a time very popular. Dividing all disease into two classes, Sthenic,—or diseases of increased action, Asthenic, or diseases arising from debility or deficient action,—it claimed to make the treatment of disease extremely simple; like Sir Robert Peel's sliding scale as applied to the corn laws of England. But it was soon found that something more was necessary to cure disease, than barely to reduce action by evacuants, and other antiphlogistic means, to the healthy standard, or by the use of stimulants to raise it to that point. Blood-letting would not cure all inflammation, or stimulants remove every form of debility.

While the theory, like all its predecessors, was soon exploded, the idea of division of diseases into those of increased or diminished action, was found to be a great principle, ever true and all important. I shall have more to say respecting this theory when I come to treat of the principles of medicine.

For many centuries there was such a superstitious reverence for the dead body, that no dissections of it were allowed, whereby physicians could obtain a knowledge of anatomy, the science of healthy organization. This being removed, all intelligent persons are aware that it has long been studied and taught as a science, and brought well nigh to perfection. Morbid or pathological anatomy, which treats of diseased structure, has been more recently improved. It has taught us the existence of diseases not before suspected,—instructed us how to cure diseases once incurable.

Physiology, the science of life, which treats of man as a living, acting being, has long been pursued as a science, but greatly improved within the last half-century. The use of the microscope has aided in the advancement of this as well as pathological anatomy. *Materia medica* has been recently greatly extended and advanced by the aid of chemistry and botany, adding new articles, and developing or separating new principles from those already in use. Therapeutics, which treats of the operation of the different means for curing diseases

and their application in practice, has been equally advanced during the last few years.

During the last half-century great advances have been made in ascertaining the causes of disease, but more particularly in determining their distinction or diagnosis. The knowledge of physical signs has been greatly advanced, so that we now readily and accurately detect and distinguish diseases of the heart and lungs and other internal organs, in some instances so early as to find them in a curable state; and we are to anticipate greater improvements in this department, so as to arrest and cure many cases now incurable. By the aid of chemistry and the microscope, we are able to examine the secretions and the excretions, ascertaining the exact seat of the disease and its nature, and thus be able to apply the appropriate remedies.

Had Bacon lived at an earlier period, his philosophy would not have aided medicine, for the facts were too few and observation too limited, to have established any important principle. But in his time these were collected in sufficient numbers to commence the establishment of medicine upon a philosophic and rational basis; and from that period to the present, an immense number of facts have been carefully observed and recorded, relating to the causes, nature and constitution of diseases,—their symptoms, diversities, distinctions, results and prevention,—the effect of remedies under the various circumstances of disease and condition of the patient: all these enable us to establish general principles founded upon truth.

“The principles, elements, or institutes of medicine,” says Dr. Williams of London, “comprise those leading and general facts and doctrines regarding disease and its treatment, which are applicable, not to individual cases only, but to groups or classes of diseases. This branch of medical knowledge is also designated by the term general pathology and therapeutics, to distinguish it from special pathology and therapeutics, or the theory and practice of medicine in relation to individual diseases.”

“The principles of medicine may be deduced in part from a knowledge of animal structure and function, anatomy and physiology, conjoined with an acquaintance with the agents which cause and remove diseases; but chiefly they are derived from a generalization of facts observed in an extensive study of disease itself, and its effects in the living and in the dead body.”\*

“The leading rules” or principles “of practice, those which guide

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\* Principles of Medicine, by Charles J. B. Williams, M. D., F. R. S., page 29.

the most experienced men, are founded on general views of diseased function and structure—that is, general pathology. The condition of the system—that is, the function, is to be taken into account; and the variations of this condition, the states of *sthenia* and *asthenia*, tone and debility, excitement and depression, *plethora* and *anæmia*, are the very subjects which general pathology explains and shows how to treat.” \*

These general principles constitute an important branch of medical knowledge, as yet imperfect,—can hardly be called a science, yet so far advanced as to be eminently useful to the practitioner. They relate to the causes of disease, pathology proper or disease itself, the division and classification of disease, their distinctions, results and prevention. Under the head of causes they treat not only of the local, definite cause of each disease, but of the general laws of contagion, epidemic influence, epidemic constitution, or periods, all which have an important influence in modifying the appearance and nature of diseases, and their proper treatment.

While speaking of the Brownian system, I stated that it contained the idea of a great principle. It was the *idea*, and the term used to describe it, rather than the principle itself, that we have adopted. Brown treats of the *sthenic* and *asthenic* diathesis, or the different state or condition of the body under disease; but when he comes to treat of particular diseases, he places them on his scale by name, either above or below the state of health. This is theory, not truth. The principle applies these terms to the condition of the system when laboring under disease, without any reference to the name. In this way we find that scarlet fever, puerperal fever, rheumatism, or small pox may at one time be attended with inflammation or increased action, at other times with deficient action or debility. It is under the guidance of this great principle that the scientific physician learns to treat with success diseases of the same name at different times, under the varying circumstances of climate, season, constitution or idiosyncrasies of his patients, with directly opposite treatment. In the application of this principle to cases as they occur in practice, the truly wise and judicious physician has an ample field for the display of great discernment and eminent skill. Nothing can be more erroneous than the prescribing for the names of a disease, though it is common among many classes of doctors and in all communities. Families having their globules, or other domestic remedies, often feel competent to prescribe if they can get a physician to name the dis-

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\* Principles of Medicine, page 20.



ease. The regularly educated physician feels the pulse, examines the tongue, the skin, the complexion, the bodily strength or debility, to ascertain not only the name and seat of the disease, but the particular state or condition of the system. Take for instance a complaint as simple and common as pain in the back. The empiric or mere routine practitioner can remember something that has cured such pains; he prescribes, and perhaps in one case out of ten he may chance to hit right; if he fails, he tries another, and so on. The educated physician examines the case, inquires in his own mind whether the seat of the disease is in the muscles, the bones which form the spinal column, the spinal cord which passes through the bones, or in the kidneys, or in some other internal organ. If the case is an intricate one, he examines the secretions and the excretions, by chemical test or the microscope. Having ascertained the seat of the disease and the pathological state of the diseased organ, and general condition of the system, he can judge with great certainty whether it is curable or incurable. If the former, he knows the remedies that are appropriate; if the latter, he knows what is best calculated to palliate suffering and make life more endurable.

I have alluded more particularly to this important principle, because of its extensive application, and for the reason that it can be readily understood and appreciated by every intelligent person. While the regular, scientific physician rejects all false theories and hypotheses, and follows only the philosophical and rational science of medicine,—“true, simply, because it obeys the laws of induction,”—the empiric, or supporters of partial systems lay their foundations upon some old theory long since exploded. For instance, the humoral pathology, “all diseases arise from bad matter in the blood; they only differ in the mode of expelling it from the system; one purges out the peccant humor, the other washes and sweats it forth.”\*

It has often been said as a reproach to medical men that “doctors disagree.” Formerly this was too often true; even thirty or forty years ago there were great divisions of parties in the profession, one party advocating a depleting or antiphlogistic course, and the other a high stimulating course. Happily these divisions have passed away; now there is great harmony in the profession; all are united in their efforts to establish a rational system of practice, depending more upon the recuperative efforts of nature. The saying that “the doctors make worse before they make better,” is with exceptional cases

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\* Principles of Medicine.

no longer true of the wisest and best classes of physicians. Their practice is more of a soothing, quieting character, often making their patient more comfortable from the first visit.\* If this improvement in practice shall remove that feeling which many families have long indulged, fear of sending early in the disease for medical assistance, lest "they should certainly be sick if they had a doctor," it will do as much good indirectly as directly, giving an opportunity for the use of appropriate means in the forming states of the disease.

The American Medical Association, composed as it is of delegates from all parts of the United States, has an important influence upon those members of the profession who have identified themselves with it, so as to derive those benefits from it which it is designed to impart. This association, in connection with the state and county societies, is making great efforts to induce medical men to make more careful observations in relation to the history, symptoms, treatment and results of disease, the nature and action of remedies. This plan, if carried out faithfully, will have an important influence in correcting present principles, and establishing new ones.

I have given a rapid and very imperfect sketch of the science of medicine, but sufficient to show that it is progressive, not regularly and uniformly, but as we witness the growth of a human being, from infancy to adult age: we see not a regular uniform advance from year to year; rather some years stationary, or making hardly a perceptible advance, then as it approaches manhood, making rapid strides to maturity; or rather like the intellectual faculty, manifesting itself in the infant as a feeble, flickering, variable principle, progressing through childhood, youth, mature age; clouded for a time by the infirmity and decay of animal life, but destined (if sanctified) after it has escaped from its prison house to make more rapid advances, shining brighter and brighter throughout eternity. So with medical science: having passed through infancy, childhood and youth, it has during the past years of the nineteenth century, been making rapid advance toward perfect manhood, and is destined hereafter to attain to great perfection.

It is characteristic of all mere theories and false systems of practice that they are not capable of embracing the truths already established. In order to maintain them with any plausibility, facts must be suppressed, or perverted; but there is not a truth in Thomsonianism, Chronothermalism, Hydropathy, or Homeopathy, that our system can

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\* See Prize Essay by Prof. Worthington Hooker, Rational Therapeutics.

not appropriate and apply, in building up a perfect structure. Unfortunately, the truths, compared with the errors and false principles in these systems, are *infinitesimals*. We are prepared to receive truth from every department of nature, from any source, however humble. Some of our important remedies have been brought into notice by humble individuals in domestic practice.

Regular medicine may be compared to a great edifice with extensive wings. It is founded upon a rock. The basement and the first stories are built of solid and permanent materials. The superstructure and the wings are yet imperfect; some of the materials used are faulty; some of the wings are not in proper proportion; but such is the construction of the building, that the failure of a stone here or there does not endanger the building. The defective materials may be removed, and perfect ones substituted. Some of the wings may be removed or remodeled. There is an appropriate place in this extensive edifice, for every perfect building material, and every tasteful ornament.

So medical science is of a compound character, or rather including a number of sciences. It is founded upon the rock of truth; then come those sciences that are nearly perfected, and demonstrated, anatomy and physiology, the collateral sciences, which may be compared to wings; the superstructure to practical medicine, yet in a forming, improving state, but destined to be more and more rapidly improved and perfected.

Another evidence of the truth and vitality of our system, is the fact that it is the only one that has maintained its hold upon the confidence, upon the most intelligent portions of the communities, for any long period.

Others have for a short time blazed up with some brilliancy, but like the *ignis fatuus*,\* flitting from bog to bog, over the meadows, now shining, then dark, then faintly flickering, till the sun arises, and it is gone.

I have only very imperfectly presented the claims of our profession, but I have no time to pursue the subject further. I will briefly allude to the *mutual responsibilities of physicians and their patients or the community*.

One great fact should be impressed upon the mind of every physician and his patients, that they have not only mutual responsibilities, but their interests are in a great measure identical. Whatever the

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\*Jack o'Lantern.

physician does to qualify himself for the practice of his profession, whatever skill he may acquire and exercise in the rapid and perfect cure of his patients, will also promote his own interests, extending his reputation, enlarging his business, and adding to his resources, but above all, giving him that peace of mind which arises from the performance of good deeds. On the other hand, whatever patients do for the benefit of their physicians, in ways that I shall point out, will tend to make them better practitioners, so that in subsequent attendance, they may be able to afford more efficient aid.

If the difficulties and uncertainties attending the practice of medicine, the amount of learning requisite to prepare one to engage in it, are in any measure what I have represented them to be, the responsibilities resting upon the physician are enough for men of the greatest minds, of the most untiring industry.

Every one about to enter upon the practice is under imperative obligations to obtain a thorough education. His mind should be well disciplined by a thorough course, adapted for that purpose; then a thorough study of the elementary and collateral sciences, attendance upon the best medical schools of the country; after this he should learn clinical medicine under the instruction of wise teachers, in hospitals and private practice. No conscientious man, if he understood the subject, would do less. The physician should know that his professional business is of sufficient importance to occupy the best energies of his mind and body. He cannot be a successful practitioner if he gives any considerable portion of his time to politics, farming, or manufacturing. The study and practice of medicine are such as to demand the undivided attention of the greatest minds, much more those of moderate capacity.

He is to continue a student as long as he continues in practice; there is to be no relaxation on account of age or experience. There are yearly, monthly, and daily improvements in medicine, which he can not know and take advantage of, unless he attains and keeps up the habit of study and investigation. If he gives up study, let him leave his patients: he has no right to approach the sick, unless with the best preparation in his power.

The gratuitous services of the physician, to which I have alluded in another place, may be performed in such a way and with such a spirit, as to be a task and a burden to the one who performs them, and be little calculated to elicit the gratitude of the recipient. But when they are the result of a truly benevolent, cheerful, willing spirit, they carry their own reward to the giver, and often call forth



the spontaneous thanks of the receiver. The physician has only to imitate, as far as possible, the only perfect being that has appeared on earth, who, while he preached the gospel to the poor, healed the sick, in order to obtain the approval of a good conscience, and receive the blessing of those ready to perish.

The true physician will be not only a messenger of love, but one of hope and good cheer. Instead of ministering to the fears and gloomy anticipations of his patients, in order to get the credit of performing wonderful cures, he will give them the full benefit of all the hope there is in their case, allaying all unnecessary alarm, quieting their fears, and often, by his cheerful looks and benevolent countenance, contribute as much to their recovery, as by the medicine he administers.

Much talking with the sick or their friends is profitable to neither party, but often leads to serious difficulties. When anything is said, let it be the frank, open-hearted, out-spoken truth. Misunderstanding and jealousies are often prevented by a little plain talk. The whole truth is not to be spoken at all times and under all circumstances, but whatever is said, let it be the truth, and nothing but the truth. We may have the most serious apprehension concerning our patients, and still there may be so much uncertainty about the result that it may be wise to communicate our fears to the friends of the patient rather than by any direct communication to give unnecessary alarm. The mutual confidence that exists between an honest, upright, prudent physician and his confiding, trustful patient, is of a peculiar and interesting character and should never be betrayed. The physician who is guilty of a breach of confidence, does it at his peril. If he persists in it he is sure to lose his business as well as his reputation. This confiding spirit, if rightly improved, may eventuate in great good to the patient. Sickness and suffering often lead the sufferer to more just views of the comparative value of this world and the one to come, a more correct understanding of their own character, and result many times in the formation of good resolutions for the guidance of their future conduct. It is within the province of the physician to strengthen these good intentions, and encourage his patients, during their convalescence, to higher and higher attainments in sound morality and pure religion. Consultations in difficult and protracted cases, if rightly conducted, confer those mutual benefits to both physician and patient, to which I have alluded. If there is harmony between the parties in the selection of a counselor, and he has the

confidence of both parties, the influence will be favorable, whatever may be the result of the case.

Patients and their friends should exhibit the same frankness toward their medical attendant, that I have enjoined upon the physician. If his visits are not as frequent as you desire, tell him so plainly, rather than complain of neglect. If they are too frequent, inform him; but then, if he is an honest, conscientious man, leave the decision with him. If you wish for a counselor, fear not giving offense by frankly stating your wishes. But in stating the obligation of patients or the community to their physician, I prefer to do it mostly by extracts, and in the first place from the code of medical ethics.

"SEC. 1. The members of the medical profession, upon whom are enjoined the performance of so many and arduous duties toward the community, and who are required to make so many sacrifices of comfort, ease and health, for the welfare of those who avail themselves of their services, certainly have a right to expect and require that their patients should entertain a just sense of the duties which they owe to their medical attendants.

"SEC. 2. The first duty of a patient is to select as his medical adviser one who has received a regular professional education. In no trade or occupation do mankind rely on the skill of an untaught artist; and in medicine, confessedly the most difficult and intricate of the sciences, the world ought not to suppose that knowledge is intuitive.

"SEC. 3. Patients should prefer a physician whose habits of life are regular, and who is not devoted to company, pleasure, or to any pursuit incompatible with his professional obligations. A patient should, also, confide the care of himself and family, as much as possible, to one physician, for a medical man who has been acquainted with the peculiarities of constitution, habits and predisposition of those he attends, is more likely to be successful in his treatment, than one who does not possess that knowledge."

"Now," says the Rev. Dr. Tappan, Chancellor of the University of Michigan, in an eloquent address entitled "Mutual Responsibility of Physicians and the Community,—“Now to whom shall we look for a reliable medical science? shall we look to him who deals in charms and spells? shall we look to the rude empiricism of the unlearned? shall we look to the Indian root doctor? shall we look to those who without any claim to be scientific, compound elixirs, pills and panaceas,—men unacquainted with anatomy, physiology, chemistry and botany,—ignorant alike of nature and man,—mix drugs at random,

and have no merit but that of exciting the imagination of the unthinking by the mystery under which they conceal their shallowness or their atrocity? Shall we look to subtle theorists, who, although not without learning, have forsaken the only safe methods of investigation, and are led astray by imaginary facts, and dream of potencies yet undiscovered, and voiceless, intangible, aerial agencies? Or, shall we look to those old established schools where learned men and true philosophers have ever been found? At these schools there is neither sciolism nor mysticism. Here, scholarship is thorough, and fact is not outrun by speculation. Here, medical science has advanced in company with the other sciences, and by the same method, and often by the same men.

“ If genius, learning, philosophical conception, legitimate investigation, and the utmost diligence, with all the aids that have hitherto been collected in our world, can meet with any success in any region of inquiry, then we must go to these schools to find the result. \* \* ”

“ If their discipline can not make reliable physicians, then our world is destitute of them. \* \* \* ”

“ Do any find fault with our schools? Then let them aid us to perfect them. Try not to pull them down. There is nothing to put in their place. Improve them as much as you please; lend every effort to bring them up to the ripest development. You can not change the science, the method, the aim, without annihilating them, and with them annihilating all medical education.

“ Do any find fault with the doctors of medicine we send forth? Let them create a public opinion that shall stimulate, aid and foster us, by demanding of our candidates the amplest preparation. But let them not abet the magician, the spirit-rappers, the ignorant or unprincipled empiric, the wild and loose theorists of all kinds. We at least are on the right track. We are trying to do some good in a legitimate way. If our eagles do not fly near enough to the sun, do you find anything more like the birds of Jove among the *quacking* brood in the marshes below. \* \* \* ”

“ Be at least as prudent in buying medicine as you are in buying flour and meat, where you first assure yourselves of the quality. Be at least as prudent in choosing a physician as you are in choosing a tailor and a shoemaker, where you first satisfy yourselves that he is a proper workman and no bungler. What is the madness which impels us to run such fearful risks of health and life? ”

“ And when you have chosen a physician, thoughtfully, judiciously, and know that he has talent, tact, education, experience, kindness,

truth, honor and morality, treat him accordingly. Repose confidence in him. Submit to his skill and discretion in your sickness. Do not call him in merely to hear your own views of your case, and to share the responsibility of your own empiricism. Let him be fully, truly, and wholly your physician. If results do not come as rapidly as you desire, do not dismiss him to try new experiments. His judgment must be better than your own. You may die in his hands, it is true. But what grounds have you for believing that you will better your case by calling in another man, or by resorting to an empirical practice. We must all die at last; and the very change you make to elude your fate, may be an act of imprudence, which seals and hastens it."

"It is your right to ask for consultation; but respect the judgment and wishes of your physician in the selection. Treat honorably your good and tried physician. Recollect his interests are your interests." "And when health returns be grateful to him. Grudge him not his equitable fees, and delay not their payment. The man who has been instrumental in saving your life, in restoring to you the blessed sensation of health, has done more for you than if he had given you an estate." "What will not a man give in exchange for his life."

I have quoted thus largely from the reverend doctor because it is eloquently expressed, and coming from such a source it has the further merit of disinterestedness. For the same reason I quote farther from an unknown authoress.\* "Like other men, the physician has his susceptibilities to sympathy, and needs encouragement and appreciation. He needs co-operation with his services, forbearance with his mistakes, and the same charity for his foibles and faults that we feel that we have a *right* to expect from him toward our own. Sometimes a physician is dismissed for some slight mistake, some oversight or omission, which, from the very painfulness of his experience in consequence, he would be on double guard against ever after, and his place is supplied by one who perhaps falls into the same or more serious misjudgment, and in his turn is likewise dismissed. None are infallible; therefore should the ill-timed and unnecessary criticism be suppressed with the same consideration we look for him toward the weaknesses and faults his position enables him to discern in our domestic circles. Nor should we expect in him creative or

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\* Melva, Family Guardian.



omnipotent power ; for when the fated arrow is sped from the quiver of the Almighty, no human hand may stay it.

“Like that of other mortals, the physician’s ear must sometimes weary of querulous tones, impatient complaint, and the continued minor key of the invalid’s moan. The inmates of that home who during a morning call from their family physician impart to him of those precious but intangible social influences which elevate, strengthen and cheer, may unwittingly transmit rays of sunshine and hopefulness through the whole round of his day’s ministrations. Animal spirits will flag sometimes under constant drafts upon sympathy and patience and the pressure of anxiety and responsibility. Then do such influences do him good like a medicine.

“Irregular meals, loss of sleep, the driving blast or cheerless rain, and the chilly night air, are as repulsive to him as to other men. The mental quiet that takes possession of the business man’s mind when he feels that *his day’s work is done*, the physician can also appreciate, and it would be equally agreeable to him to feel that there was no liability to an interruption of the social chat ; no call from the warm, attractive fireside ; no necessity for relinquishing slipper and easy chair, and the enjoyment of a new publication, or converse with family or friends.” “But if suffering humanity calls, the call is imperative. Personal comfort or social courtesy must be foregone at a moment’s notice, and domestic attractions exchanged for the anxious and often repulsive service of the sick room. Let the family, then, who enjoy the friendship and services of a physician whose qualifications meet their moral and physical needs, who is to them an acquisition, a *household blessing*, duly appreciate, love, honor and sustain him. Let them remember him at the domestic altar, and in many a token and attention of social life, as they do their pastor, and so regulate the intercourse of the relationship that there may be mutual advantages,—reciprocal aids in learning how to live and in preparation for death.”

I will add only one or two ideas to those so eloquently and forcibly expressed above, and those such as can only be fully appreciated by the medical man. The studies to be prosecuted after one has entered upon practice, though all-important, can be pursued at best only under great difficulties. The whole day, including many times the twenty-four hours, will be wholly occupied in attendance upon the sick, and this often in consequence of irregular and untimely calls unnecessarily made. This is especially the case when the

physician's practice extends over a large region of country. If the patients or their friends were only to inform their medical attendant of their wants early in the day, stating as near as possible the urgency or the opposite of the case requiring attention, he might so arrange his business as to leave a valuable portion of his time nearly every day for reading and investigation, which otherwise may be entirely lost in going over and over the same roads and streets. This is another instance of the mutual interest of physician and patient. By giving the former time for improvement, he acquires knowledge and skill which is applied for the benefit of the sick. I have always had some families who were careful to send in the morning, and if the case was not urgent to request attendance in the course of the day. Such families have always had my best attentions, while those who were always crying wolf! wolf! may occasionally have suffered when actually in his clutches.

In conclusion, let us for a moment look forward to that medical millennium which we shall never behold, but may be allowed to anticipate, when the science of medicine shall be perfected; those principles now uncertain be fully elucidated and established; when every practitioner shall be thoroughly and perfectly educated for his profession, and withal be a benevolent, upright, conscientious man, having such full confidence in those to whose wants he ministers, that he will have no anxiety for his own temporal wants, but be able to give the whole energies of mind and body to the investigation and removal of disease and suffering; when the most delicate and refined female shall be able to find a physician in whom she can place such implicit confidence as to impart to him the first indication of disease, and thus avoid years of suffering; when every woman who now wisely selects a machinist to regulate her sewing machine, or a practical musician to tune her piano, shall act as discreetly in the selection of one to regulate that delicate mechanism which sends a glow of health and beauty through her frame, or those ten thousand nervous filaments, which, when in tune, send thrills of joy and pleasure through her system; when every manufacturer shall select his physician as wisely as he does his machinist; every lawyer, who in his profession examines evidence so closely and estimates it so exactly, shall examine science before he rejects it; every minister of the gospel shall hate nostrums as he does Pantheism,—avoid infinitesimals as he would transcendentalism,—believing there is science in medicine as well as theology; when all persons, in every depart-

ment of life, shall fully and perfectly understand the laws of hygiene, and be willing to follow them, thus preventing a vast amount of unnecessary disease, so that what is suffered may be justly and truly termed a dispensation of Providence; when the whole community shall unite with the wisest and best physicians in arresting disease in its incipient state, curing what in this approaching, enlightened age, shall be curable, greatly alleviating and palliating what is incurable. "Blessed are they who see the day of glory, but more blessed are they who contribute to its approach."\*

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